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# THE QUARTERLY

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THE REMINISCENCES OF MRS. DILUE HARRIS. II.<sup>1</sup>

October, 1835.

Stephen F. Austin arrived in Texas in September. He had been a prisoner in Mexico since December, 1833. He did all in his

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Adèle B. Looscan has kindly contributed some notes to this part of the narrative which are printed over her name. Concerning Part I of the Reminiscences Mrs. Harris says, in a letter to Mrs. Looscan: \* \* \* "In my reminiscences of the Roark family I copied from my father's journal. Brown's account of the affair is not correct. Those men, Spears, Cox, and Collins Beason were killed by Indians near the time Elijah Roark was murdered. McCormick was probably in San Antonio when Leo Roark arrived there. At the time it was impossible to get correct news. It would be months before events happening near San Antonio would be heard of at Brazoria.

"Those four men Mr. Brown gives an account of, Spears, Cox, Beason, and McCormick, were from the Colorado. Beason's father settled where the town of Columbus now stands. The place was called Beason's Ferry. Santa Anna crossed the Colorado at Beason's Ferry. When I moved to Columbus in the year 1845 the Beasons were living there, two brothers, Abe and Leander Beason, two sisters, Miss Mary Beason and Mrs. Bluford Dewees. Mr. Dewees wrote a book on early days in Texas. \* \* \* All these people have passed away leaving but few descendants. \* \* \* In the QUARTERLY [for October, p. 123] the printer makes me say father advised the English people to go to California. It should have been Columbia. \* \* \* My husband's name was Ira A. Harris, not Ira S."

power to prevent the people from holding the convention, for he said Texas was in no condition to fight Mexico. He could have quieted the people, but General Ugartechea in command at San Antonio decided to send Captain Tenorio back to Anahuac by water with two hundred men and some cannon.<sup>1</sup> A man came from San Antonio and said the order was to be sent to Wiley Martin soon to arrest Mosely Baker, W. B. Travis, R. M. Williamson, and others, and he said General Cos would be in Texas by and by with a large army.

The convention<sup>2</sup> met at San Felipe in September. The first act was a call for volunteers to capture San Antonio before it could be reinforced by General Cos.

Our school closed in September. The teacher said there was so much excitement that it affected the small children, and the young men could not be got back in school at all after the election in September. There was a constant talk of war. Messengers from San Felipe going to Brazoria and Harrisburg stopped at our house from time to time and told the news. All the men in our neighborhood went to San Felipe. Stephen F. Austin was elected to command the army, and it was to rendezvous on the Guadalupe River at Gonzales.

This month we heard again from the priest, Padre Alpuche. He was in San Antonio, and had been in fact a spy sent from Mexico through New Orleans and Nacogdoches to San Felipe.

November, 1835.

Mrs. Stafford came home in a schooner from New Orleans. She had spent two weeks in that city waiting for the schooner. She said there was a good deal of excitement there about Texas, but they never got any news direct from Mexico. The captains of ships told them that Mexico had no idea of sending a large army to Texas. We heard so many different reports that we did not know what to believe. Mrs. Stafford was to stay until spring and take some of

<sup>1</sup>There is some confusion here as to Austin's attitude. In his speech of September 12, at Brazoria, he urged the holding of the Consultation strongly.—EDITOR QUARTERLY.

<sup>2</sup>That is, the Consultation; but it did not meet till October 15, and the next day it adjourned to November 1.—EDITOR QUARTERLY.

the negroes back to the United States. She would have gone at once, but she had to wait until the cotton was gathered and sold.

There was no mistake about General Cos and his army. He got to San Antonio before the Texans organized. It was said that he was going to march through Texas during the winter, liberate the slaves, and force all discontented persons to leave the country. Every man and boy that had a gun and horse went to the army, and the women and children were left to finish picking the cotton. There were but three men left in our neighborhood—father, Adam Stafford, and Moses Shipman. Father was keeping two boys, one named Alexander Armstrong, and the other William Morris. They were orphans and half brothers. One of them was fifteen years old, and the other eleven. Brother Granville was thirteen. These boys were picking cotton and talking war all the time. Father said if they had guns and horses they would go to the army.

Mr. Dyer came home from San Felipe and said there was so much dissension among the delegates he would not wait for the convention to adjourn. As he and his wife were going to the United States on business, he thought it best to come away. They went on to the United States, taking passage from Harrisburg on the same schooner that Mrs. Stafford came home on. Adam Stafford and Mr. Dyer shipped cotton at the same time.

Since the garrison at Anahuac had been forced to surrender, the schooners were coming to Harrisburg frequently. The captains said there was a Mexican war vessel near Galveston Island. Farmers in our neighborhood would not ship any more cotton from Harrisburg then. A steamboat had been sent from New Orleans, which was to run from Brazoria on the Brazos river to San Felipe and Washington, and the cotton at Stafford's gin was to be hauled and piled near Mr. William Little's at the Henry Jones ferry. The steamboat was the Yellowstone. She had been in the St. Louis trade when father's family lived in that city in the years '29 to '32. She was now to remain in the Texas trade, and was to carry the cotton to the mouth of the Brazos, where it was to be shipped on schooners to New Orleans. Father had promised us children to take us to see the steamboat when she was at the landing, and Mr. Jones said he would give a grand ball Christmas, when the captain of the boat had told him he expected to be at the ferry. Mr. Jones

lived on the west bank of the Brazos, and Mr. Little on the east bank.

We heard that the Texans had General Cos and the Mexican army surrounded in San Antonio, and that there had been fighting, but that none of our neighbors were engaged in it except Leo Roark. His mother and sisters were very uneasy on his account.

December, 1835.

Everything was at a standstill and times very gloomy. The Brazos river was so low the steamboat couldn't go up. She was to go to Groce's ferry to a little town called Washington. There were two towns in Austin's colony named Washington, one above San Felipe, the other on Galveston bay.<sup>1</sup>

There was a new girl baby at our house born the fifth of the month. Sister and I were very happy over the babe. Brother Granville and the two orphan boys teased us and said we couldn't go to see the steamboat or attend the ball, but we were so pleased with our little sister that we did not care. Father said he was very proud of his four daughters, and that he would be as popular as Mr. Choate when they were grown. Mr. Choate had seven daughters, three of them married. Father said his only trouble was to get a wagon to haul his daughters around.

We heard that the Texans had captured San Antonio, and that General Cos was a prisoner. The fighting commenced on the fifth of the month, but the Mexicans did not surrender until the tenth. None of the men from our neighborhood were killed or wounded, but several we knew were wounded. Messrs. Bell and Neal came home and said that General Cos and the Mexicans under his command had been sent across the Rio Grande.

Father went to Columbia and Brazoria with a cart load of peltry, consisting of the skins of otters, deer, bears, panthers, wild cats, wolves, and 'coons. He was in need of medicines, powder, and lead,

<sup>1</sup>Washington on Galveston Bay was laid out by Col. James Morgan, and was called by him New Washington. It was located on the Johnson Hunter league, and as it was the residence of Col. Morgan it became known as Morgan's Point, which name it bears. At this place, only a few days before the battle of San Jacinto, Santa Anna and his staff came near capturing President David G. Burnet as the latter was boarding the schooner Flash, Captain Luke Falvel, for Galveston.—ADELE B. LOOSCAN.

and could not wait any longer for the steamboat, which went up the river later.

January, 1836.

Father returned home on New Year's day, after having been gone two weeks. He sold the hides and laid in a good supply of drugs and medicines. He would have gone to Harrisburg, but there was no drug store in that place. He said it would have been better to haul his cotton to Harrisburg than wait for the steamboat, and that it was doubtful whether he could get it to market before May or June. He got an advance of one hundred dollars on his cotton. While he was gone he met some of the English people that had lived in our neighborhood. Mr. Page had moved to Galveston bay, and the Adkinses were living on the Brazos near Columbia. Miss Jane Adkins, the pretty English girl, was married, and so was her mother, the widow Adkins.

All the men and boys that went to the army from our part of the country had come home and were at work. They seemed to think there would be no more trouble with Mexico. There had been a garrison of Texas soldiers left at San Antonio under Colonel Travis. There were men enough in Texas to have organized a large army if they could all have been concentrated at one point.

The people became very much discouraged on learning that Mexico had sent a revenue cutter to Galveston. It didn't try to land, but anchored outside. There were several schooners at Harrisburg loaded with cotton and hides, that couldn't get out. The captains said that the first big storm that came would blow the war ship away, and that then they would run out.

February, 1836.

Every farmer was planting corn. Mr. Dyer and his wife came from New Orleans on board a schooner which entered the mouth of the Brazos, but they didn't see the revenue cutter. They came on the boat to Columbia, and from there on horseback. They had heard such bad news that they did not finish their visit. It was that Generals Santa Anna and Cos with a large army were *en route* for Texas. This news was brought direct from Tampico, Mexico, to New Orleans by an American who came on a French ship. The

Dyers said men and munitions were coming to Texas. We had heard this news before, but didn't know whether it was true.

Mrs. Stafford went away, taking one negro woman and two negro children, besides her own child, and Mr. Harvey Stafford went with them. They traveled on horseback, and their friends were very uneasy on their account, as there were Indians on the Trinity river, and also in East Texas.

The news that Santa Anna was marching on San Antonio was confirmed. The people at Goliad and San Patricio were leaving their homes, and everybody was preparing to go to the United States. There was more or less dissension among the members of the Council of the Provisional Government. They deposed Governor Smith and installed Lieutenant Governor Robinson. The Mexican army arrived at San Antonio, and the Council went to Washington on the Brazos. People were crossing the river at Fort Bend and Jones' ferry going east with their cattle and horses. Everybody was talking of running from the Mexicans.

March, 1836.—*The Fall of the Alamo.*

The people had been in a state of excitement during the winter. They knew that Colonel Travis had but few men to defend San Antonio. He was headstrong and precipitated the war with Mexico, but died at his post. I remember when his letter came calling for assistance. He was surrounded by a large army with General Santa Anna in command, and had been ordered to surrender, but fought till the last man died. A black flag had been hoisted by the Mexicans. This letter came in February. I have never seen it in print, but I heard mother read it. When she finished, the courier who brought it went on to Brazoria. I was near eleven years old, and I remember well the hurry and confusion. Uncle James Wells came home for mother to help him get ready to go to the army. We worked all day, and mother sat up that night sewing. She made two striped hickory shirts and bags to carry provisions. I spent the day melting lead in a pot, dipping it up with a spoon, and moulding bullets. The young man camped at our house that night and left the next morning. Our nearest neighbors, Messrs. Dyer, Bell, and Neal, had families, but went to join General Houston. Father and Mr. Shipman were old, and Adam Stafford a cripple, and they stayed at home.

By the 20th of February the people of San Patricio and other western settlements were fleeing for their lives. Every family in our neighborhood was preparing to go to the United States. Wagons and other vehicles were scarce. Mr. Stafford, with the help of small boys and negroes, began gathering cattle. All the large boys had gone to the army.

By the last of February there was more hopeful news. Colonel Fannin with five hundred men was marching to San Antonio, and General Houston to Gonzales with ten thousand.<sup>1</sup>

Father finished planting corn. He had hauled away a part of our household furniture and other things and hid them in the bottom. Mother had packed what bedding, clothes, and provisions she thought we should need, ready to leave at a moment's warning. Father had made arrangements with a Mr. Bundick to haul our family in his cart; but we were confident that the army under General Houston would whip the Mexicans before they reached the Colorado river.

Just as the people began to quiet down and go to work, a large herd of buffaloes came by. There were three or four thousand of them. They crossed the Brazos river above Fort Bend, and came out of the bottom at Stafford's Point, making their first appearance before day. They passed in sight of our house, but we could see only a dark cloud of dust, which looked like a sand storm. Father tried to get a shot at one, but his horse was so fractious that it was impossible. As the night was very dark we could not tell when the last buffalo passed. We were terribly frightened, for it was supposed that the Indians were following the herd. The buffaloes passed and went on to the coast, and the prairie looked afterwards as if it had been plowed.<sup>2</sup>

We had been several days without any news from the army, and did not know but that our men had been massacred. News was carried at that time by a man or boy going from one neighborhood to another. We had heard that the Convention had passed a decla-

<sup>1</sup>These reports were, of course, untrue.—EDITOR QUARTERLY.

<sup>2</sup>This was the last time that buffaloes in large numbers were seen in this part of Texas; but for some years a few ranged on Mustang and Chocolate Bayous, and a Mr. Hill, of Grimes county, had several running with his cattle as late as the early 40's.—ADELE B. LOOSCAN.



ration of independence, and elected David G. Burnet president, and Sam Houston commander-in-chief of the army. On the 12th of March came the news of the fall of the Alamo. A courier brought a dispatch from General Houston for the people to leave. Colonel Travis and the men under his command had been slaughtered, the Texas army was retreating, and President Burnet's cabinet had gone to Harrisburg.

Then began the horrors of the "Runaway Scrape." We left home at sunset, hauling clothes, bedding, and provisions on the sleigh with one yoke of oxen. Mother and I were walking, she with an infant in her arms. Brother drove the oxen, and my two little sisters rode in the sleigh. We were going ten miles to where we could be transferred to Mr. Bundick's cart. Father was helping with the cattle, but he joined us after dark and brought a horse and saddle for brother. He sent him to help Mr. Stafford with the cattle. He was to go a different road with them and ford the San Jacinto. Mother and I then rode father's horse.

We met Mrs. M—. She was driving her oxen home. We had sent her word in the morning. She begged mother to go back and help her, but father said not. He told the lady to drive the oxen home, put them in the cow pen, turn out the cows and calves, and get her children ready, and he would send assistance.

We went on to Mrs. Roark's, and met five families ready to leave. Two of Mr. Shipman's sons arrived that night. They were mere boys, and had come to help their parents. They didn't go on home; father knew that Mr. Shipman's family had gone that morning, so he sent them back for Mrs. M—'s.

It was ten o'clock at night when we got to Mrs. Roark's. We shifted our things into the cart of Mr. Bundick, who was waiting for us, and tried to rest till morning. Sister and I had been weeping all day about Colonel Travis. When we started from home we got the little books he had given us and would have taken them with us, but mother said it was best to leave them.

Early next morning we were on the move, mother with her four children in the cart, and Mr. Bundick and his wife and negro woman on horseback. He had been in bad health for some time and had just got home from visiting his mother, who lived in Louisiana. He brought with him two slaves, the woman already mentioned and

a man who was driving the cart; and, as Mr. Bundick had no children, we were as comfortable as could have been expected.

We had to leave the sleigh. Sister and I had grieved all the day before about Colonel Travis, and had a big cry when our brother left us. We were afraid Mrs. M— would be left at home. We had a fresh outburst of grief when the sleigh was abandoned, but had the satisfaction of seeing Mrs M— and her children.

Mr. Cotie would not go to the army. He hauled five families in the big blue wagon with his six yoke of oxen, besides negroes, provisions, bedding, and all the plunder the others could not carry.

We camped the first night near Harrisburg, about where the rail-

March, 1836.—*The Runaway Scrape.*

road depot now stands. Next day we crossed Vince's Bridge and arrived at the San Jacinto in the night. There were fully five thousand people at the ferry. The planters from Brazoria and Columbia with their slaves were crossing. We waited three days before we crossed. Our party consisted of five white families: father's, Mr. Dyer's, Mr. Bell's, Mr. Neal's, and Mr. Bundick's. Father and Mr. Bundick were the only white men in the party, the others being in the army. There were twenty or thirty negroes from Stafford's plantation. They had a large wagon with five yoke of oxen, and horses, and mules, and they were in charge of an old negro man called Uncle Ned. Altogether, black and white, there were about fifty of us. Every one was trying to cross first, and it was almost a riot.

We got over the third day, and after travelling a few miles came to a big prairie. It was about twelve miles further to the next timber and water, and some of our party wanted to camp; but others said that the Trinity river was rising, and if we delayed we might not get across. So we hurried on.

When we got about half across the prairie Uncle Ned's wagon bogged. The negro men driving the carts tried to go around the big wagon one at a time until the four carts were fast in the mud. Mother was the only white woman that rode in a cart; the others travelled on horseback. Mrs. Bell's four children, Mrs. Dyer's three, and mother's four rode in the carts. All that were on horseback had gone on to the timber to let their horses feed and get

water. They supposed their families would get there by dark. The negro men put all the oxen to the wagon, but could not move it; so they had to stay there until morning without wood or water. Mother gathered the white children in our cart. They behaved very well and went to sleep, except one little boy, Eli Dyer, who kicked and cried for Uncle Ned and Aunt Dilue till Uncle Ned came and carried him to the wagon. He slept that night in Uncle Ned's arms.

Mother with all the negro women and children walked six miles to the timber and found our friends in trouble. Father and Mr. Bundick had gone to the river and helped with the ferry boat, but late in the evening the boat grounded on the east bank of the Trinity and didn't get back until morning. While they were gone the horses had strayed off and they had to find them before they could go to the wagons. Those that travelled on horseback were supplied with provisions by other campers. We that stayed in the prairie had to eat cold corn bread and cold boiled beef. The wagons and carts didn't get to the timber till night. They had to be unloaded and pulled out.<sup>1</sup>

March, 1836.—*Crossing the Trinity River.*

At the Trinity river men from the army began to join their families. I know they have been blamed for this, but what else could they have done? The Texas army was retreating and the Mexicans were crossing the Colorado, Col. Fannin and his men were prisoners, there were more negroes than whites among us and many of them were wild Africans, there was a large tribe of Indians on the Trinity as well as the Cherokee Indians in Eastern Texas at Nacogdoches, and there were Tories, both Mexicans and Americans, in the country. It was the intention of our men to see their families across the Sabine river, and then to return and fight the Mexicans. I must say for the negroes that there was no insubordination among them; they were loyal to their owners.

<sup>1</sup>A note written by Mrs. Harris in the year 1898 is as follows: "I know of no one living at this time who was in that party except my brother, Granville Rose, and myself. He is seventy-five years old, and I am seventy-three. He was not with us when we crossed the Trinity, but was helping Mr. Stafford with his cattle."

Our hardships began at the Trinity. The river was rising and there was a struggle to see who should cross first. Measles, sore eyes, whooping cough, and every other disease that man, woman, or child is heir to, broke out among us. Our party now consisted of the five white families I first mentioned, and Mr. Adam Stafford's negroes. We had separated from Mrs. M—, and other friends at Vince's bridge. The horrors of crossing the Trinity are beyond my power to describe. One of my little sisters was very sick, and the ferryman said that those families that had sick children should cross first. When our party got to the boat the water broke over the banks above where we were and ran around us. We were several hours surrounded by water. Our family was the last to get to the boat. We left more than five hundred people on the

March, 1836.—*Crossing the Trinity.*

*Retreating Before the Mexican Army Under General Santa Anna.*

west bank. Drift wood covered the water as far as we could see. The sick child was in convulsions. It required eight men to manage the boat.

When we landed the lowlands were under water, and everybody was rushing for the prairie. Father had a good horse, and Mrs. Dyer let mother have her horse and saddle. Father carried the sick child, and sister and I rode behind mother. She carried father's gun and the little babe. All we carried with us was what clothes we were wearing at the time. The night was very dark. We crossed a bridge that was under water. As soon as we crossed, a man with a cart and oxen drove on the bridge, and it broke down, drowning the oxen. That prevented the people from crossing, as the bridge was over a slough that looked like a river.

Father and mother hurried on, and we got to the prairie and found a great many families camped there. A Mrs. Foster invited mother to her camp, and furnished us with supper, a bed, and dry clothes.

The other families stayed all night in the bottom without fire or anything to eat, and the water up in the carts. The men drove the horses and oxen to the prairies, and the women, sick children, and negroes were left in the bottom. The old negro man, Uncle Ned, was left in charge. He put the white women and children in

his wagon. It was large and had a canvas cover. The negro women and their children he put in the carts. Then he guarded the whole party until morning.

It was impossible for the men to return to their families. They spent the night making a raft by torch light. As the camps were near a grove of pine timber, there was no trouble about lights. It was a night of terror. Father and the men worked some distance from the camp cutting down timber to make the raft. It had to be put together in the water. We were in great anxiety about the people that were left in the bottom; we didn't know but they would be drowned, or killed by panthers, alligators, or bears.

As soon as it was daylight the men went to the relief of their families and found them cold, wet, and hungry. Many of the families that were water bound I didn't know; but there were among them Mrs. Bell's three children, and Mrs. Dyer and her sister, Mrs. Neal, with five children. Mr. Bundick's wife had given out the first day that we arrived at the river. Her health was delicate, and as she and her husband had friends living near Liberty they went to their house. When the men on the raft got to those who had stayed all night in the Trinity bottom they found that the negroes were scared, and wanted to get on the raft; but Uncle Ned told them that his young mistress and the children should go first. It was very dangerous crossing the slough. The men would bring one woman and her children on the raft out of deep water, and men on horseback would meet them. It took all day to get the party out to the prairies. The men had to carry cooked provisions to them.

The second day they brought out the bedding and clothes. Everything was soaked with water. They had to take the wagon and carts apart. The Stafford wagon was the last one brought out. Uncle Ned stayed in the wagon until everything was landed on the prairie. It took four days to get everything out of the water.

The man whose oxen were drowned sold his cart to father for ten dollars. He said that he had seen enough of Mexico and would go back to old Ireland.

It had been five days since we crossed the Trinity, and we had heard no news from the army. The town of Liberty was three miles from where we camped. The people there had not left their homes, and they gave us all the help in their power. My little sister that had been sick died and was buried in the cemetery at

Liberty. After resting a few days our party continued their journey, but we remained in the town. Mother was not able to travel; she had nursed an infant and the sick child until she was compelled to rest.

A few days after our friends had gone a man crossed the Trinity in a skiff bringing bad news. The Mexican army had crossed the Brazos and was between the Texas army and Harrisburg. Fannin and his men were massacred. President Burnet and his cabinet had left Harrisburg and gone to Washington on the bay and were going to Galveston Island. The people at Liberty had left. There were many families west of the Trinity, among them our nearest neighbors, Mrs. Roark and Mrs. M—.

April, 1836.—*The Battle of San Jacinto.*

We had been at Liberty three weeks. A Mr. Martin let father use his house. There were two families camped near, those of Mr. Bright and his son-in-law, Patrick Reels, from the Colorado river. One Thursday evening all of a sudden we heard a sound like distant thunder. When it was repeated father said it was cannon, and that the Texans and Mexicans were fighting. He had been through the war of 1812, and knew it was a battle. The cannonading lasted only a few minutes, and father said that the Texans must have been defeated, or the cannon would not have ceased firing so quickly. We left Liberty in half an hour. The reports of the cannon were so distant that father was under the impression that the fighting was near the Trinity. The river was ten miles wide at Liberty.

We travelled nearly all night, sister and I on horseback and mother in the cart. Father had two yoke of oxen now. One yoke belonged to Adam Stafford and had strayed and father found them. The extra yoke was a great help as the roads were very boggy. We rested a few hours to let the stock feed. Mr. Bright and two families were with us. We were as wretched as we could be; for we had been five weeks from home, and there was not much prospect of our ever returning. We had not heard a word from brother or the other boys that were driving the cattle. Mother was sick, and we had buried our dear little sister at Liberty.

We continued our journey through mud and water and when we camped in the evening fifty or sixty young men came by who were

going to join General Houston. One of them was Harvey Stafford, our neighbor, who was returning from the United States with volunteers. Father told them there had been fighting, and he informed them that they could not cross the Trinity at Liberty. They brought some good news from our friends. Mr. Stafford had met his sisters, Mrs. Dyer, and Mrs. Neal. He said there had been a great deal of sickness, but no deaths. He said also that General Gaines of the United States army was at the Neches with a regiment of soldiers to keep the Indians in subjection, but didn't prevent the people from crossing with their slaves. General Gaines said the boundary line between the United States and Mexico was the Neches.

The young men went a short distance from us and camped. Then we heard some one calling in the direction of Liberty. We could see a man on horseback waving his hat; and, as we knew there was no one left at Liberty, we thought the Mexican army had crossed the Trinity. The young men came with their guns, and when the rider got near enough for us to understand what he said, it was "Turn back! The Texas army has whipped the Mexican army and the Mexican army are prisoners. No danger! No danger! Turn back!" When he got to the camp he could scarcely speak he was so excited and out of breath. When the young men began to understand the glorious news they wanted to fire a salute, but father made them stop. He told them to save their ammunition, for they might need it.

Father asked the man for an explanation, and he showed a despatch from General Houston giving an account of the battle and saying it would be safe for the people to return to their homes. The courier had crossed the Trinity River in a canoe, swimming his horse with the help of two men. He had left the battle field the next day after the fighting. He said that General Houston was wounded, and that General Santa Anna had not been captured.

The good news was cheering indeed. The courier's name was McDermot. He was an Irishman and had been an actor. He stayed with us that night and told various incidents of the battle. There was not much sleeping during the night. Mr. McDermot said that he had not slept in a week. He not only told various incidents of the retreat of the Texas army, but acted them. The first time that mother laughed after the death of my little

sister was at his description of General Houston's helping to get a cannon out of a bog.

We were on the move early the next morning. The courier went on to carry the glad tidings to the people who had crossed the Sabine, but we took a lower road and went down the Trinity. We crossed the river in a flat boat. When Mr. McDermot left us the

April, 1836.—*On the way back Home.*

young men fired a salute. Then they travelled with us until they crossed the river.

We staid one night at a Mr. Lawrence's, where there were a great many families. Mrs. James Perry was there. She had not gone east of the Trinity. Her husband, Captain James Perry, was in the army. Mrs. Perry was a sister of Stephen F. Austin. My parents knew them in Missouri. She had a young babe and a pretty little daughter named Emily.

After crossing the Trinity River we had a disagreeable time crossing the bay. It had been raining two days and nights. There was a bayou to cross over which there was no bridge, and the only way to pass was to go three miles through the bay to get around the mouth of the bayou. There were guide-posts to point out the way, but it was very dangerous. If we got near the mouth of the bayou there was quicksand. If the wind rose the waves rolled high. The bayou was infested with alligators. A few days before our family arrived at the bay a Mr. King was caught by one and carried under water. He was going east with his family. He swam his horses across the mouth of the bayou, and then he swam back to the west side and drove the cart into the bay. His wife and children became frightened, and he turned back and said he would go up the river and wait for the water to subside. He got his family back on land, and swam the bayou to bring back the horses. He had gotten nearly across with them, when a large alligator appeared. Mrs. King first saw it above water and screamed. The alligator struck her husband with its tail and he went under water. There were several men present, and they fired their guns at the animal, but it did no good. It was not in their power to rescue Mr. King. The men waited several days and then killed a beef, put a quarter on the bank, fastened it with a chain, and then



watched it until the alligator came out, when they shot and killed it. This happened several days before the battle.<sup>1</sup>

We passed the bayou without any trouble or accident, except the loss of my sunbonnet. It blew off as we reached the shore. The current was very swift at the mouth of the bayou. Father wanted to swim in and get it for me, but mother begged him not to go in the water, so I had the pleasure of seeing it float away. I don't remember the name of the bayou, but a little town called Wallace was opposite across the bay. We saw the big dead alligator, and we were glad to leave the Trinity.

Father's horse had strayed, but we wouldn't stop to find it. He said when he got home he would go back and hunt for it.

April, 1836.—*On the San Jacinto Battle Field.*

We arrived at Lynchburg in the night. There we met several families that we knew, and among them was our neighbor, Mrs. M—. She had travelled with Moses Shipman's family.

We crossed the San Jacinto the next morning and stayed until late in the evening on the battle field. Both armies were camped near. General Santa Anna had been captured. There was great rejoicing at the meeting of friends. Mr. Leo Roark was in the battle. He had met his mother's family the evening before. He came to the ferry just as we landed, and it was like seeing a brother. He asked mother to go with him to the camp to see General Santa Anna and the Mexican prisoners. She would not go, because, as she said, she was not dressed for visiting; but she gave sister and me permission to go to the camp. I had lost my bonnet crossing Trinity Bay and was compelled to wear a table cloth again. It was six weeks since we had left home, and our clothes were very much dilapidated. I could not go to see the Mexican prisoners with a table cloth tied on my head for I knew several of the young men. I was on the battle field of San Jacinto the 26th of April,

<sup>1</sup>Mr. King's widow and two children, a son and daughter, lived at Harrisburg for a time after the Revolution and then moved to Galveston. The daughter married a Mr. Vedder, of Galveston, and is still living there. The son also married and lived in Galveston.—ADELE B. LOOSCAN.

To this Mrs. Harris adds that Mrs. King died of yellow fever in Houston in 1836, leaving one son, a printer, Ben F. King.

1836. The 28th was the anniversary of my birth. I was eleven years old.

We stayed on the battle field several hours. Father was helping with the ferry boat. We visited the graves of the Texans that were killed in the battle, but there were none of them that I knew. The dead Mexicans were lying around in every direction.

Mother was very uneasy about Uncle James Wells, who was missing. Mr. Roark said uncle had been sent two days before the battle with Messrs. Church Fulcher, and Wash Secrest to watch General Cos. They had gone to Stafford's Point, and were chased by the Mexicans and separated. Fulcher and Secrest returned before the battle. Mr. Roark says the burning of Vince's bridge prevented several of the scouts from getting back.

Father worked till the middle of the afternoon helping with the ferry boat, and then he visited the camp. He did not see General Santa Anna, but met some old friends he had known in Missouri. We left the battle field late in the evening. We had to pass among the dead Mexicans, and father pulled one out of the road, so we could get by without driving over the body, since we could not go around it. The prairie was very boggy, it was getting dark, and there were now twenty or thirty families with us. We were glad to leave the battle field, for it was a grewsome sight. We

*April, 1836.—Leaving the San Jacinto Battle Ground.*

camped that night on the prairie, and could hear the wolves howl and bark as they devoured the dead.

We met Mr. Kuykendall's family from Fort Bend, now Richmond. Their hardships had been greater than ours. They had stayed at home and had had no idea that the Mexican army was near. One day the negro ferryman was called in English, and he carried the boat across. On the other side he found the Mexicans, who took possession of the boat and embarked as many soldiers as it could carry. While they were crossing some one said it was Captain Wiley Martin's company. They knew he was above, near San Felipe, and men, women, and children ran down the river bank expecting to meet their friends; but just as the boat landed the negro ferryman called out "Mexicans!" There were three or four families of the Kuykendalls, and they ran for the bottom. Mrs. Abe Kuykendall had a babe in her arms. She ran a short distance

and then thought about her little girl and went back. She saw her husband take the child from the nurse, and she afterwards said she was then the happiest woman in the world.

April, 1836.—*Camping near the Battle Ground.*

*The Kuykendalls.*

One old gentleman ran back to the house, got his money, went through a potato patch and buried it. The money was silver and was so heavy he could not carry it away. One young married woman with a babe in her arms ran into a big field and followed the party that was on the outside. The fence was high, and they had now gotten out of sight of the Mexicans, so the woman's husband came to the fence, and she gave him the child. He told her to climb over, but she turned and ran in a different direction. Her husband followed the other families. They stayed that night in a cane-brake without anything to eat, and the children suffered terribly. The next day they made their way to Harrisburg and got assistance. They were at Lynchburg during the battle, and were helped by General Houston, and furnished means to get back home.

Mrs. Abe Kuykendall nursed the child that had been left by its mother. She said they had heard from the mother. She had gone through the field and got out, and had gone twenty miles down the river to Henry Jones' ferry, where she fell in with some people she knew. She thought her husband and friends would go there. She was alone the first day and night, and the next day she got to Henry Jones'.

April, 1836.—*Hearing bad News.*

Early the next morning we were on the move. We had to take a roundabout road, for the burning of Vince's bridge prevented us from going directly home. We could hear nothing but sad news. San Felipe had been burned, and dear old Harrisburg was in ashes. There was nothing left of the Stafford plantation but a crib with a thousand bushels of corn. The Mexicans turned the houses at the Point into a hospital. They knew that it was a place where political meetings had been held.

Leo Roark told father while we were in the camps that he was confident Colonel Almonte, General Santa Anna's *aide-de-camp*,

was the Mexican that had the horses for sale in our neighborhood the fourth of July, '34. Father could not get to see General Almonte, for he was anxious to get us away from the battle ground before night.

Burning the saw mill at Harrisburg and the buildings on Stafford's plantation was a calamity that greatly affected the people. On the plantation there were a sugar-mill, cotton-gin, blacksmith-shop, grist-mill, a dwelling-house, negro houses, and a stock of farming implements. The Mexicans saved the corn for bread, and it was a great help to the people of the neighborhood.

April, 1836.—*Going Home after the Battle.*

We camped that evening on Sims' bayou. We met men with Mexicans going to the army, and heard from Brother Granville. Mr. Adam Stafford had got home with the boys, and they were all well. We heard that the cotton that the farmers had hauled to the Brazos with the expectation of shipping it to Brazoria on the steamer Yellowstone, then at Washington, was safe. Father said if he got his cotton to market I should have two or three sun-bonnets, as he was tired of seeing me wearing a table-cloth around my head.

We heard that Uncle James Wells was at Stafford's Point. He made a narrow escape from being captured by the Mexicans. When he and Messrs. Secrest and Fulcher were run into the bottom, his horse ran against a tree and fell down, and uncle was badly hurt. He lost his horse and gun. He went into the bottom. He saw the houses burning on the Stafford plantation. As he was overseer there when he joined the army at the time when Colonel Travis called for assistance, it was like his home. General Cos marched on the next day, but left a strong guard at the Point.

While mother was talking about Uncle James, he and Deaf Smith rode up to our camp. It was a happy surprise. Uncle James's shoulder was very lame. The night after he lost his horse

April, 1836.—*Camping on Sims' Bayou. Meeting Deaf Smith.*

and gun he crawled inside the Mexican line and captured a horse and saddle. He then went into the bottom at Mrs. M—.'s house, where he found corn and bacon and a steel mill for grinding the

corn. His arm was so lame he could not grind corn, so he ate fried eggs and bacon. He had been to our house, and he said everything we left on the place had been destroyed. He watched on the prairie that night till he saw so many Mexican fugitives wandering about that he knew there had been a battle. He met Deaf Smith and other men sent by General Houston to carry a dispatch from Santa Anna to Filisola. Deaf Smith told uncle all about the battle, and said he had captured General Cos the next day six miles south of Stafford's Point. Cos had a fine china pitcher full of water and one ear of corn. He carried Cos to the Point, where he got a horse, and then took him back to the San Jacinto battle ground. He left the fine pitcher at the Point, and he gave it to Uncle James. Uncle stayed there till Mr. Smith returned from Filisola's camp with an answer to Santa Anna's dispatch.

Mr. Smith could speak Spanish. He said that when he captured General Cos, whom he did not know, he asked him if he had been in the battle. On being answered in the affirmative, he asked him if he had been a prisoner. General Cos replied that he had not, but that he escaped after dark the evening of the battle, and that he abandoned his horse at the burnt bridge. Smith then asked him if he had seen General Cos, and he said that he had not. Smith continued: "I am Deaf Smith, and I want to find General Cos. He offered one thousand dollars for my head, and if I can find him I will cut off his head and send it to Mexico." When they arrived at the battle ground he was very much surprised to find his prisoner was General Cos. He took the horse and saddle back to Uncle James, and gave him the fine pitcher, and when we got home uncle gave the pitcher to mother.

Father examined uncle's shoulder, and said there were no bones broken, and that he would be well in three or four weeks. Mother had some of Uncle James' clothing. She trimmed his hair, and made him go to the bayou, bathe, and put on clean clothes. All our soldiers were dirty and ragged. As Uncle James had fever, mother wanted him to go home with her, but he would not. He said that he had been absent from the army ten days, and must report to headquarters.

Deaf Smith was very anxious to get back to the army. He was dark and looked like a Mexican. He was dressed in buckskin and

said that he would be ashamed to be seen in a white shirt. He said that Uncle James would be taken for a tory or a stay-at-home.

Deaf Smith was the man that helped burn the Vince bridge. He said if the bridge had not been destroyed, General Filisola would have heard of Santa Anna's defeat and would have marched to his assistance, as he was not more than thirty miles from the battle ground. General Urrea was also on the west bank of the Brazos river with a division of the Mexican army. When the first fugitives from the battle field arrived at the headquarters of Filisola, he did not believe their report, but when others came with the horrid tidings, he became convinced. The Mexican fugitives gave such a dreadful account of Santa Anna's fall that General Filisola, when Deaf Smith arrived, was preparing to cross the river to join General Urrea.

Mr. Smith left our camp before daylight. Uncle James Wells stayed with us until we were ready to start home. He was sick all night, and father gave him medicine and bound up his arm.

General Santa Anna was captured the next day after the battle. He was seen by Captain Karnes to plunge into the bayou on a fine black horse. He made his escape from the battle ground on Allen Vince's horse, but not on the fine saddle. The horse went home carrying a common saddle. He was taken to headquarters and after a few days was restored to Allen Vince. James Brown went to General Sherman and pointed out the horse. General Santa Anna was captured by James A. Silvester, Washington Secrest, and Sion Bostick. A Mr. Cole was the first man that got to Santa Anna.<sup>1</sup> He was hid in the grass, was dirty and wet, and was dressed as a common soldier. He rode to the camps behind Mr. Robinson. The men had no idea that they had Santa Anna a prisoner till the Mexicans began to say in their own language, "the president."

<sup>1</sup>A note made by Mrs. Harris in 1898 says: "Santa Anna gave Mr. Cole a cup. Mrs. Cole, his widow, has the cup. She lives at Eagle Lake, Colorado county. Wash Secrest died in Columbus, Colorado county, in the year '59. S. Bostick resided many years in Colorado county. [He now lives at San Saba, Texas.—EDITOR QUARTERLY.] I knew Bostick, Cole, and Secrest."

April 30, 1836.—*Going Home. Mrs. Brown's Family.*

We stayed one day on Sims' bayou. There were more than one hundred families, and all stopped to rest and let the stock feed. We met a Mrs. Brown<sup>1</sup> who was living at William Vince's when the Mexican army crossed the bridge. They took possession of Allen Vince's fine black horse. Mrs. Brown's son James, a lad aged thirteen, went and mounted the horse and would not give him up. The Mexicans made the boy a prisoner. His mother came out and asked for General Santa Anna. Colonel Almonte came out and asked in English what he could do for her. She told him she was a subject of the king of England, and demanded protection. Almonte assured her that she and her children would not be hurt, and ordered her son to be liberated. Santa Anna's servant put a fine saddle on the horse. It was ornamented with gold, and had solid gold stirrups. When the captured plunder was sold at auction, the Texas soldiers bid it in and presented it to General Houston. Mrs. Brown stayed at Mr. William Vince's till after the battle. We met some English friends from Columbia that were going home. The Adkinses that lived in our neighborhood were relatives of Mrs. Brown. We met the pretty English girl, Jenny Adkins. She was married and was the mother of two children.

April 30, 1836.—*Home, Sweet Home.*

We camped one day and two nights on Sim's Bayou. We had traveled since the twenty-first, without resting, half the time in mud and water. It was only fifteen miles home.

Early in the morning we broke camp. We were alone; the other families lived farther down the country. The weather was getting warm, and we stopped two hours in the middle of the day at a water hole. When the sun set we were still five miles from home.

We overtook our nearest neighbor, Mrs. M——. She had left Sims' Bayou that morning with the Shipman family, but had sepa-

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Brown was a Scotch woman. Her son, James K. Brown, afterwards became a prominent merchant of Galveston. He never married, and has been dead many years. A daughter Jessie married a Mr. Wade and lived in St. Louis.—ADELE B. LOOSCAN.

Mrs. Harris adds a note to the effect that Mrs. Brown gave a description of the fine saddle and recounted the story of the burning of the bridge.

rated from them, saying she could find the way home. One of her oxen got down, and she could neither get it up nor get the yoke off the other ox. When we drove up she had her four children on her horse and was going to walk to our house. She knew that we had started home that morning. If we had not stopped two hours we should have been with her about the middle of the afternoon. Father unyoked her oxen, and turned loose one of his that was broken down and put the other along with Mrs. M——'s stronger ox to her cart. It was now dark and we traveled slower. The oxen were tired and kept feeding all the time. One of Mrs. M——'s daughters and I rode her horse; it was a great relief to me, for I was tired of riding in the cart.

It was ten o'clock when we got home. We camped near the house.

Sunday morning, May 1, 1836.—*Home.*

Father said we could not go in until morning. Uncle James told mother that the floor had been torn up by the Mexicans in searching for eggs. He would have put the house in order, but his shoulder and arm were so painful he could not work.

As soon as it was light enough for us to see we went to the house, and the first thing we saw was the hogs running out. Father's bookcase lay on the ground broken open, his books, medicines, and other things scattered on the ground, and the hogs sleeping on them. When Mrs. M——'s children, sister, and I got to the door, there was one big hog that would not go out till father shot at him. Then we children began picking up the books. We could not find those that Colonel Travis gave us, but did find broken toys that belonged to our dear little sister that died. Through the joy and excitement since the battle of San Jacinto, we had forgotten our sad bereavement.

The first thing that father did after breakfast was to go to the corn field. He had planted corn the first of March, and it needed plowing. He did not wait for Monday, or to put the house in order, but began plowing at once. His field was in the bottom, and he had hidden his plow.

Mother said I should ride Mrs. M——'s horse, and go to Stafford's Point and bring Brother Granville home. I did not want to go. Sister said that I could wear her bonnet. My dress was very



much the worse for wear. It was pinned up the back, my shoes were down at the heels, and my stockings were dirty. I was greatly embarrassed, for I knew all the boys were at the Point. I did all the primping that the circumstances would permit, plaiting my hair, etc. I had had my face wrapped in a table cloth till it was thoroughly blanched. When I got to the Point there were more than one hundred people there, men, women, children, negroes, and Mexicans. Many of the Mexicans were sick and wounded; I had never seen such a dirty and ragged crowd. The boys were without shoes and hats, and their hair was down to their shoulders. After I had met them I did not feel ashamed of my appearance. Brother got his horse, and we went home.

I was not near the burnt buildings; the plantation was in the bottom, on Oyster Creek. The Stafford family used the house at the Point for a summer residence; and, as they brought their negroes out of the bottom in the summer, there were a good many houses at the Point.

When brother and I got home we found mother and Mrs. M—— at the wash tub. I was shocked, for mother had always kept the Sabbath. At noon father and brother put down the floor, Mrs. M——'s girls and I scoured it, and we moved in.

Mrs. M—— took a bucket and went back to give water to her sick oxen, but found the ox dead. Brother Granville helped her to move home that evening.

Mother was very despondent, but father was hopeful. He said Texas would gain her independence and become a great nation.

Uncle James Wells came home with two Mexicans for servants, and put them to work in the corn field. There was now a scarcity of bread. The people came back in crowds, stopping at Harrisburg and in our neighborhood. A colony of Irish that had left San Patricio in February stopped at Stafford's Point.

Father had hid some of our things in the bottom, among them a big chest. Mother had packed it with bedding, clothes, and other things we could not take when we left home. After a few days, Uncle and brother hauled it to the house, and that old blue chest proved a treasure. When we left home we wore our best clothes. Now our best clothes were in the chest, among them my old sun-bonnet. I was prouder of that old bonnet than in after years of a new white lace one that my husband gave me.

By the middle of May our neighbors that we had parted from came home. They had got to the Sabine River before they heard of the battle of San Jacinto.

Father and the men that had cotton on the banks of the Brazos went to the river to build a flat boat to ship their cotton to Brazoria. Mother said that it would be best for them to wait a few days, but they would not stop. They said that as they had been camping for two months it would make them sick to sleep in a house. Uncle James stayed with us. He had several bales of cotton, but was not able to work. He looked after our Mexicans and helped the women in the neighborhood to get their corn worked. They all got Mexicans, but it required an overseer to make them work.

There was no prospect of a cotton crop in our neighborhood. The people had been very short of provisions, and there would have been suffering among them if the citizens of New Orleans had not sent a schooner load to Harrisburg. The provisions were distributed without cost.

There was considerable talk of a new town's being started on Buffalo Bayou about ten miles above Harrisburg by the Allen brothers. They wanted to buy out the Harris claim at Harrisburg, but the Harris brothers would not sell.<sup>1</sup>

June, 1836.—*Shipping Cotton on a Flatboat.*

The first of June the men sent word that they had the cotton on a boat ready to start, and that Uncle Ned should be sent with the Stafford's wagon to bring home family supplies. It was more than fifty miles by land, but a long and dangerous route by water.

The new town laid out by the Allens was named Houston, in honor of General Houston. There were circulars and drawings sent out, which represented a large city, showing churches, a court-house, a market house and a square of ground set aside to use for a building for Congress, if the seat of government should be located there. The government had been on the move since the

<sup>1</sup>The land at Harrisburg was in litigation between the heirs of Jno. R. Harris and Robert Wilson, and by the time the courts were in session and the suit settled, the town of Houston had been made the seat of government, which gave it a great advantage over the more favorably located town of Harrisburg.—ADELE B. LOOSCAN.

beginning of February, stopping temporarily at Washington on the Brazos, Harrisburg, Washington on the bay, Galveston Island, Lynchburg, Velasco, and Columbia. There was so much excitement about the city of Houston that some of the young men in our neighborhood, my brother among them, visited it. After being absent some time they said that it was hard work to find the city in the pine woods; and that, when they did, it consisted of one dugout canoe, a bottle gourd of whisky and a surveyor's chain and compass, and was inhabited by four men with an ordinary camping outfit. We had a good joke on the boys at their disappointment. We asked them at what hotel they put up, and whether they went to church and to the theater. They took our teasing in good part and said they were thankful to get home alive. They said the mosquitoes were as large as grasshoppers, and that to get away from them they went bathing. The bayou water was clear and cool, and they thought they would have a nice bath, but in a few minutes the water was alive with alligators. One man ran out on the north side, and the others, who had come out where they went in, got a canoe and rescued him. He said a large panther had been near by, but that it ran off as the canoe approached.

While father was gone, a man came to our house trying to find a place to teach school. Mother told him that the men who had families were absent, but that she thought he could get a school, and that she expected father home in a few days. He said he was without money. He had been in the battle of San Jacinto, but as the army had gone west, he had decided to teach until he could get money to return to the United States. He offered to teach us three children for his board until he could get a school. Mother was glad to have a teacher for us, for we had been out of school since September, '35, when our teacher and the young men had gone to San Antonio, then in possession of the Mexicans under General Cos. We gathered what books we could and began work. We were well

June, 1836.—*Stafford's Point.*

pleased with the teacher, whose name was Bennet. We were without paper and wrote on slates.

The first copy Mr. Bennet wrote seemed to amuse our Mexican servant. He picked up a pencil, wrote a few words, and handed the

slate to Mr. Bennet. The Mexican wrote French, and the teacher was a French scholar, and they had a long conversation in that language. The Mexican had been a colonel under Santa Anna, and he said that he and Santa Anna were not far apart when the battle began. The Mexican soldiers were resting, and Santa Anna was asleep, not expecting an attack by the Texans. The cavalry had just finished watering their horses, and Santa Anna's servant was riding Allen Vince's fine black stallion, using a common saddle. He said the last he had seen of Santa Anna was when he was mounting the horse dressed in ordinary clothes. We had treated the Mexican like a negro servant, and had made him work, churn, wash, and do all kinds of drudgery, besides working in the corn field. He said he was well off, and had a home and family in Mexico. He stayed with us only a few days after he let us know he was a gentleman. I don't remember his name. We called him Anahuac, after the town that was the Mexican port of entry.

July 4, 1836.—*A Bull fight.*

Father and the men arrived home the last of June. It was three weeks from the time they left Mr. William Little's before they landed at Brazoria. They sold their cotton for a good price and bought family supplies. Father did not forget his promise, but got sister and me nice bonnets.

The men employed Mr. Bennet to teach, and built a shed on the side of the log cabin we used the year before for a school house. A blacksmith, a Mr. Thompson, had rented the house and opened a shop. He said then when it rained he would quit work and let the children use his shop. There were only eight pupils. Mr. Dyer sent three boys and Mrs. M—— two girls. Mr. A—— would not send his children. He and Mrs. M—— were keeping up their quarrel. Brother Granville and William Dyer were the largest boys in school.

We had been in school but a few days when we had quite an adventure with two wild bulls. There was no fence around the log house, and the cattle fed close by. One day two large bulls were fighting, and got near the house. The teacher said for the children to go into the shop. We ran to the door, but could not get it open; so we climbed up the side of the house, and with the help of the

teacher and the boys got on the roof. By the time we reached it the bulls were under the shed. It was fun for the boys, but the girls were scared. The bulls pawed the ground, fought, and bellowed, the boys laughing and hallooing, and the girls crying. The boys said we would have to stay on the house all night, if nobody came for us. The teacher was as helpless as a child. He had been reared in Mobile, Alabama. After the boys had had their fun, they got down and ran the cattle off. The bulls quit fighting and went away bellowing. The next day the men built a fence around the school house. Our Texas boys had a good joke on Mr. Bennet; they said if he had showed fight the cattle would have run.

Mr. William Stafford, owner of the Stafford plantation came back to Texas. He and his family had been living in the United States since the year '34. He came back by water and landed at Galveston. He had not had a letter from Texas since April. His daughters had written while they were on the Sabine river, but he heard at Galveston for the first time that all the buildings on his plantation had been burned by the Mexicans. He said he would not rebuild, and gave his land and cattle to his sons, Adam and Harvey, and his married daughters, Mrs. Dyer and Mrs. Neal. He meant to move the negroes, who had built several small houses, to Eastern Texas in the winter.

July, 1836.—*The great City of Houston.*

We heard glowing accounts of the city on Buffalo Bayou. Several families from Brazoria and Columbia had moved there, among them Ben Fort Smith, his mother, Mrs. Obedience Smith, and family, Mr. Woodruff, Mr. Mann, with his wife and two step sons, Flournoy Hunt and Sam Allen, Moseley Baker, and others. Uncle James had gone to Houston to locate land. Everybody had the Houston fever. They were building a steam saw mill there. Father was going to locate land near Houston on Bray's Bayou. Mr. Smith wanted him to settle in town, and said he would give him a lot; but father could not do so, as he had to live on the land to secure title.

The fourth of July came and went and we had no celebration, but were to have a barbecue and ball in September. President David G. Burnet issued a proclamation for an election the first Monday in September. The young people had no amusements and

no church to attend. I was in my twelfth year and had not heard a sermon since Easter '33, when I was in New Orleans. We had been disappointed the Christmas before in our expectation of going to a ball at Henry Jones' and seeing the steamer Yellowstone. The boat ran down the river a few days before the battle of San Jacinto, and the Mexicans tried to catch it with their lariats. The Yellowstone had gone to New Orleans.

August, 1836.

August came, but it seemed as if September never would. Our school was doing well, and several young men had entered, among them Leo and Jack Roark, Moses and James Shipman, Mr. Calder and Harvey Stafford.

Mr. Stafford had gone back to the United States. His wife was to return to Texas in the winter and take the slaves back to Eastern Texas. There was a prospect for plenty of corn in our neighborhood, but no cotton, as there was no cotton gin. Father said there would be good crops of both corn and cotton raised near Brazoria and Columbia.

One of father's St. Louis friends, Mr. Gillette, was visiting us. His wife was a sister of Ex-Governor Henry Smith's wife. Mr. Gillette's wife died while we were in St. Louis. He had two little children, a boy named Edwin and a girl named Martha. Mother took care of the children till they were sent to married sisters in Kentucky. We were glad to see Mr. Gillette, especially since he had seen mother's father three months before, while we had not heard from St. Louis in three years. It was a great satisfaction to hear from our friends.

September, 1836.—*An Election.*

The first of September was Monday.<sup>1</sup> The election held then was the

All things come to him who waits. The barbecue, ball, and election were at Mr. Dyer's, near our house. The people came from different settlements and several of our Harrisburg friends were there. William Harris and Robert Wilson were judges and Clinton

<sup>1</sup>This is a mistake. September the first, 1836, came on Thursday.—EDITOR QUARTERLY.

Harris clerk. Others from Harrisburg were Mr. Doby, George and Isaac Iiams, James Brewster, Miss Isabella Harris, sister of the four brothers, Lewis B. Harris and several young ladies, among them Misses Elizabeth and Jane Earl. Mr. McDermot, the courier who had carried the news of the battle of San Jacinto to the Sabine River, was there. He was young, handsome, and sociable, and was quite a hero. He was electioneering for Sam Houston and Mirabeau Lamar. When the returns came in Houston was elected president and Lamar, vice-president.

I had been to an election in Harrisburg in the year '33, when a delegate was elected to represent Coahuila and Texas in the Mexican Congress, but I don't remember the names of the candidates. The next election I attended was at Mr. Dyer's, when delegates were sent to San Felipe, in the fall of '35. W. P. Harris and C. C. Dyer were elected at that time. That election for president and vice-president of the Republic of Texas, September 1, 1836, was the last I attended. There was no drinking or fighting. The ladies spent the day quilting. The young people began dancing at three o'clock and kept it up till next morning. \* \* \* Mother had ripped up an old silk and made me a ball dress. It was one she had before she married, and it had been left in the old blue chest that was hid in the bottom when we ran away from the Mexicans. That was my last ball at an election. After that there was too much whisky drunk for ladies to be present. \* \* \*

October, 1836.—*After the Ball.*

We were going to school. Mother was very anxious to move, and would have gone to the United States, if father had consented.

Congress met at Columbia the third of this month. President David G. Burnet retired from office, and Houston and Lamar were inaugurated.

There was a great deal of excitement among the people in regard to General Santa Anna. He was a prisoner, and there were some of the Texans who would have had him shot for the slaughter of Colonel Fannin's men; while others wished him sent to Mexico, under promise to acknowledge the independence of Texas. There had been severe threats made against President Burnet, and he was glad to become a private citizen. Father said that Mr. Burnet was

honorable and just in all his official life, but there were so many ambitious men in Texas they were liable to start strife among the people. If Colonel Travis and Colonel Fannin had obeyed orders and retreated until they could have joined General Houston at Gonzales, the Mexican army could not have crossed the Colorado, but every man seemed to think he could command an army.

November and December, 1836.

Our school closed the last of December and Mr. Bennet went back to the United States. Father took him to Harrisburg, where he boarded a schooner for New Orleans. That was the first time father had been to Harrisburg after the Mexicans burned it. He said the people were building, and that they had made the Mexicans burn brick and help build houses.

Father visited the new town at Houston. He said the Allens would bring a steamboat from New York the next year; that they were having one built. It was to run from Galveston to Houston. They would have bought the Yellowstone, but she was too large to turn around in Buffalo Bayou.

Mrs. Stafford came back. She was getting ready to move the negroes. She said she would farm near the Sabine river, while Mr. Stafford stayed in the state of Mississippi, and if Texas were invaded again by Mexico, she would cross the negroes into Louisiana, as they had the right to run from the Indians or Mexicans. Uncle Ned came to tell us goodby. He said he would take care of his mistress and take the negroes to the United States.

January 1, 1837.

The year '36 had gone with all its horrors. The Christmas before, in 1835, we were expecting to go to Henry Jones' to a ball and to see the steamer Yellowstone carry off the cotton. She did not come, but ferried the Texas army across the Brazos at Groce's. While a part of the Mexican army was camped at Henry Jones' ferry she passed down, and the Mexicans tried to catch her with their lariats.

This Christmas there had been three deaths, two of them in our neighborhood. Mrs. Roark died on Christmas day, Mr. Shipman's eldest son died a few days after, and a Mr. Gordon died with consumption.



All our neighbors were preparing to move. Mr. Dyer was to move to Fort Bend, and Mr. Neal had located land on Bray's Bayou, ten miles from Houston. Mr. Bell lived on rented land and was going to move. Since the cotton gin on Stafford's plantation had been burned there was no use for the farmers to raise cotton, for they would have had to haul it twenty miles to have it ginned. No one would build again till the trouble with Mexico was settled.

General Santa Anna was still a prisoner. Father saw him at Dr. Phelps's, near Columbia. Stephen F. Austin died early in December, but we did not hear the sad news till father returned from Columbia.

February, 1837.

Father was planting corn. He said there would be a market for corn, as there would be a great many people coming to Texas that year. The planters from the states of Mississippi and Louisiana were moving to Texas.

Congress had appointed judges and divided Texas into judicial districts. Court was to be held in Houston in March as that town was to be the seat of Harris county. Congress was to meet in Houston in May. The land office at San Felipe had been closed by the Mexican government in the year '34. Father and Colonel Travis, the hero of the Alamo, were in San Felipe at the time. Father didn't locate land. The land office would be opened the first of June in Houston. Father was going to locate land on Bray's Bayou, five miles from Houston, and was to move there in the summer. We were very sorry to move from the place that had been our home since January '34, but as father was to get a home very near Houston the change would be for the best.

Mrs. M— was to remain. She had a large stock of cattle and did not pay any rent, so she was satisfied. Father advised her to locate land, but all the land near by had been grabbed by speculators that had swarmed in from the United States.

March, 1837.—*Court in Houston.*

The first court held in the Republic of Texas, under the new régime, was in Houston, March, 1837. Father attended the court. He had been summoned by the sheriff of Harrisburg county, John W. Moore, to serve on the grand jury. The jury sat

on a log under an arbor of pine bushes. Mr. Moore had been alcalde under the Mexican government.

This court witnessed another act in the A— and M— tragedy. Mrs. M— went before the grand jury and had Mr. A— indicted for the murder of her husband. He was the first man tried in Houston for murder and he was acquitted. He had been tried at Harrisburg for the same crime before Judge David G. Burnet in '34 and pronounced not guilty. Poor man, he had had so much trouble he decided to leave that part of Texas.

Father said he went out on Bray's Bayou and cut his name on a pine tree, and that he would camp there soon and build a corn crib, so he could claim the land.

One of Mr. Woodruff's step-daughters, Miss Mary Smith, married a Mr. McCrory.<sup>1</sup> They were the first people to marry in Houston.

The young men in Houston were preparing to give a grand ball on the twenty-first of April. The dancing was to be in the capitol building, if the representative hall was in a condition to be used.

April, 1837.—*Celebrating the First Anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto near Stafford's Point.*

When father returned from Houston after the grand jury adjourned he said that if possible he would take us to the ball on the twenty-first of April at Houston. He had an invitation for Mrs. Rose and daughters, with Clinton Harris' compliments written on the back. To say I was wild at the prospect would best describe my happiness, till mother reminded me that one of our neighbors, a Mrs. Turner, was very sick and had sent for father as soon as he returned home. She said that she would not leave a sick neighbor with two children to go anywhere. The Turners were refugees from San Patricio and had been but a short time among us.

The young men in our neighborhood said that they must have a

<sup>1</sup>Mr. McCrory was a gallant soldier in the war for independence. He lived only a few weeks after his marriage, and some years afterwards his widow married Hon. Anson Jones, the last President of the Republic of Texas. Mrs. Jones is still living at her home in Houston.—ADELE B. LOOSCAN.

ball on the first anniversary of the battle of San Jacinto. There were but few young ladies amongst us. Several had married and moved away, and everyone that could was going to Houston. Mrs. Dyer said that they could dance at her house. There was an old Irishman living near us that had two pretty daughters, but he would not allow the boys to visit them; so the young men asked mother to see if she could get him to let the girls attend the ball. Their mother had been dead several years. Mother went to see the old man, whose name was Paddy Malone. The names of the girls were Margaret and Rosie. He was so pleased by mother's visit that he consented for her to take them to the ball. He was a Roman Catholic, and asked mother not to let any d— heretic make love to his girls.

The ball was not a success. There were but few young people present, and the pretty young Irish girls monopolized all the attention of the young men. None of our Harrisburg friends attended. \* \* \* This was the last time the four families of Dyer, Neal, Bell, and Rose met. We had lived near neighbors since the year '34 without a word of dissension among us.

After the ball we all went home sadly disappointed, and to make the affair worse, several young people stopped at our house on their way from Houston and told us what a grand affair the first San Jacinto ball there had been.

The summer of '37 soon passed. We had a good school and raised a good crop. Harvey Stafford died very suddenly with congestion. As his death occurred soon after our San Jacinto ball, it was a sad bereavement, for he was a favorite with the old people as well as young. The Irish colony from San Patricio left early in the summer, and Paddy Malone with his pretty daughters went with them.

In September we moved to our new home on Bray's Bayou. We lived that winter in a log house, attending church in Houston and going to school there in the year '38. The teacher's name was Hambleton. He taught the second school in Houston. Mrs. Sawyer taught the first. She married a Mr. Lockhart. The school house was built of rough plank and consisted of two rooms. The boys' room was without a plank floor, and there was no shutter to the door, nor glass to the window. Rough planks placed on barrels and nail kegs served for desks and seats. The names of the families

represented were: Rose, Parker, Woodruff, King, Macleroy, Cooper, Martin, Kilgore, Gayley, and Vernon. Sam Allen and his half-brother, Flourney Hunt, attended, and others whose names I don't remember, among them a pretty girl from New York, who criticised our school, Texas, and Houston till we nicknamed her Texas. Several German families sent their children to study English.